

Message Text

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E.O. 11652:

TAGS: PFOR, TU, MASS

SUBJECT: SECRETARY'S PRESS CONFERENCE: STATEMENT ON MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO TURKEY, AND REPLY TO QUESTION

1. AT HIS PRESS CONFERENCE DECEMBER 7 THE SECRETARY MADE THE FOLLOWING STATEMENT REGARDING MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO TURKEY ON BEHALF OF THE PRESIDENT AND HIMSELF:

2. BEGIN TEXT. AS YOU KNOW, CONGRESS IN OCTOBER ENACTED LEGISLATION WHICH WILL CUT OFF MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO TURKEY ON DECEMBER 10. AS YOU ARE ALSO AWARE, THE SENATE HAS NOW ACTED TO EXTEND THE PERIOD PRIOR TO SUCH A CUTOFF. IT IS ABSOLUTELY ESSENTIAL, AND THE PRESIDENT AND I STRONGLY URGE, THAT THE HOUSE TAKE SIMILAR ACTION IMMEDIATELY.

3. TO BEGIN WITH, THE CONGRESSIONAL DECISION TO TERMINATE
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MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO TURKEY HAS NOT SERVED THE PURPOSE IT

WAS DESIGNED TO ACCOMPLISH. RATHER, IT UNDERMINES THE ABILITY OF THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT TO ASSIST IN BRINGING ABOUT A JUST SETTLEMENT OF THE TRAGIC CONFLICT ON CYPRUS.

4. WE HAD MADE PROGRESS WITH THE TURKISH GOVERNMENT IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF STEPS DESIGNED TO MAKE POSSIBLE THE INITIATION OF NEGOTIATIONS. CONGRESSIONAL ACTION IN OCTOBER, SETTING A TERMINAL DATE FOR MILITARY ASSISTANCE,

CONTRIBUTED SUBSTANTIALLY TO THE DIFFICULTIES THAT HAVE PREVENTED THE BEGINNING OF NEGOTIATIONS. UNLESS THE CONGRESS ACTS NOW TO PERMIT THE CONTINUED FLOW OF MILITARY ASSISTANCE, FURTHER EFFORTS BY THE UNITED STATES TO ASSIST IN RESOLVING THE CRISIS WILL BE THWARTED AND OUR ABILITY TO PLAY A FUTURE USEFUL ROLE WILL BE UNDERMINED.

5. THE UNITED STATES HAS MADE CLEAR THAT IT DOES NOT APPROVE OF ACTIONS TURKEY HAS TAKEN ON CYPRUS. WE HAVE EQUALLY MADE CLEAR THAT TURKEY SHOULD DISPLAY FLEXIBILITY AND A CONCERN FOR THE INTERESTS OF THE OTHER PARTIES INVOLVED IN THE DISPUTE.

6. THE UNITED STATES WILL CONTINUE TO DO ALL IT CAN TO ASSIST THE PARTIES IN ARRIVING AT AN EQUITABLE AND ENDURING RESOLUTION OF THE CYPRUS PROBLEM. BUT IF WE ARE DEPRIVED OF DIPLOMATIC FLEXIBILITY, THERE WILL BE LITTLE THAT WE WILL BE ABLE TO ACCOMPLISH.

7. EVEN MORE IMPORTANT, U.S. MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO TURKEY IS NOT, AND HAS NEVER BEEN, GRANTED AS A FAVOR. IT HAS BEEN THE VIEW OF THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT SINCE 1947 THAT THE SECURITY OF TURKEY IS VITAL TO THE SECURITY OF THE EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN, TO NATO EUROPE, AND THEREFORE TO THE SECURITY OF THE ATLANTIC COMMUNITY. THESE ARE THE REASONS, AND THESE ALONE, THAT WE GRANT MILITARY ASSISTANCE. THEY WERE COMPELLING WHEN WE FIRST DECIDED TO GRANT SUCH AID; THEY ARE EQUALLY COMPELLING TODAY. IN 1947 OUR COMMITMENT TO ASSIST GREECE AND TURKEY MARKED THE TURNING POINT IN THE BUILDING OF A SECURITY SYSTEM WHICH
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HAS CONTRIBUTED TO WESTERN SECURITY. ARE WE NOW TO ESTABLISH A NEW TURNING POINT WHICH WILL MARK THE END OF OUR COMMITMENT TO A SYSTEM THAT HAS SERVED THE FREE COUNTRIES SO WELL?

8. THE SECURITY INTERESTS OF THE WEST MAY BE IRREPARABLY DAMAGED UNLESS THE CONGRESS TAKES IMMEDIATE ACTION TO PERMIT MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO TURKEY TO CONTINUE. END

TEXT.

9. DURING THE QUESTION AND ANSWER PERIOD THE FOLLOWING QUESTION AND REPLY WERE GIVEN RE TURKEY:

10. BEGIN TEXT: QUESTION: MR SECRETARY, IN CONNECTION WITH YOUR OPENING STATEMENT ON AID, THE AID BILL AND THE POSSIBLE DAMAGE THAT WOULD BE DONE BY THE HOUSE TURNING DOWN THE AID BILL, ON THE RELATIONSHIP WITH TURKEY. YOU HAVE SAID A NUMBER OF TIMES IN THE PAST THAT YOU HAVE BEEN ON THE VERGE OF ACHIEVING A BREAKTHROUGH ON THE CYPRUS

QUESTION.

WHERE DOES THAT STAND NOW? CAN YOU OFFER THE HOUSE ANY HOPE THAT IF THEY APPROVE THE BILL THAT AT SOME PERIOD BEFORE THE CUTOFF DATE, YOU WILL BE ABLE TO ACHIEVE A BREAKTHROUGH?

ANSWER: WELL, LET ME MAKE TWO SEPARATE POINTS:

FIRST, MILITARY AID TO TURKEY IS NOT GIVEN PRIMARILY IN THE CONTEXT OF THE CYPRUS QUESTION. MILITARY AID TO TURKEY IS PART OF THE OVERALL DEFENSE OF THE FREE WORLD. IT HAS ALWAYS BEEN CONSIDERED AS AN ESSENTIAL PART OF NATO AND, GIVEN THE FORESEEABLE CRISES IN THE EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN, IT WOULD SEEM TO US AXIOMATIC THAT ONE SHOULD NOT DRIVE TURKEY OUT OF A DEFENSE RELATIONSHIP WITH THE UNITED STATES AT THIS PARTICULARLY CRUCIAL PERIOD.

SO THE FUNDAMENTAL POINT WE ARE MAKING IS THAT MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO TURKEY IS NOT A FAVOR WE DO TO TURKEY. IT IS A REFLECTION OF A BASIC RELATIONSHIP.

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SECONDLY, ON NEGOTIATIONS WITH RESPECT TO CYPRUS, THE UNITED STATES HAS INDICATED ON A NUMBER OF OCCASIONS THAT, IN OUR VIEW, CONCESSIONS SHOULD BE MADE BY TURKEY -- THAT WE WOULD USE OUR INFLUENCE IN THAT DIRECTION. AND WE HAVE TALKED TO THE GREEK, CYPRIOT AND TURKISH GOVERNMENT IN THAT SENSE.

THE CONGRESSIONAL ACTION IN OCTOBER PROVIDED A MAJOR SETBACK TO THESE EFFORTS. THE DOMESTIC CRISIS IN TURKEY WAS ANOTHER PRINCIPAL FACTOR.

WE BELIEVE THAT OVER A PERIOD OF THE NEXT FEW MONTHS, PROGRESS IN GETTING NEGOTIATIONS STARTED CAN BE ACHIEVED. INDEED, IT WAS MY INTENTION, WELL KNOWN TO THE PARTIES LONG

BEFORE THIS ISSUE CAME UP AND THE APPOINTMENTS HAD BEEN MADE, TO TALK TO BOTH THE TURKISH AND GREEK FOREIGN MINISTERS AT SOME LENGTH, WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE NATO MEETING, TO SEE WHETHER MATTERS COULD NOT BE MOVED FORWARD.

NOW I WOULD LIKE TO EMPHASIZE THAT THE QUESTION OF MILITARY AID TO TURKEY DOES NOT INDICATE ANY PARTICULAR PREDILECTION TOWARDS TURKEY -- NOR DOES IT INDICATE ANY SUPPORT FOR TURKEY ON THE PARTICULAR ISSUES THAT ARE BEFORE US IN GREEK-TURKISH NEGOTIATIONS, OR ON THE CYPRIOT ISSUE. IT IS TO BE SEEN IN THE CONTEXT OF THE OVERALL SECURITY OF

THE WEST.

I DO BELIEVE THAT PROGRESS IS POSSIBLE ON NEGOTIATIONS ON CYPRUS, AND THE UNITED STATES IS CERTAINLY PREPARED TO USE ITS INFLUENCE IN THE DIRECTION THAT I HAVE INDICATED.
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